A GRAINE OF Musterd-seed, OR, THE LEAST *measure of grace that is or can be effectuall to Salvation.*

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TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE AND VERTVOVS LADY, THE LAdy *Margaret*, Counteſſe of *Cumberland*, grace and peace.

RIGHT Honorable, The kingdom of heauen, of which the ſcripture ſpeaketh ſo oft, is properly a certaine ſtate or conditiõ, wherby we ſtand in the fauour and loue of God, in and by Chriſt. And this kingdome is compared to a graine of muſterd-ſeede, to teach vs that a man is euen at that inſtant already entered into the kingdome of heauen, whẽ the Lord that good husband-man hath

cast but some litle portion of faith or repentance into the ground of the heart; Yea though it be but as one grain of musterd-seede. Of this litle graine I haue penned this treatise, in quantitie answerable thereto: and now I present the same to your Ladyship, not to supply your want (for I hope you are stored with manie grains of this kinde) but to performe some dutie on my part. Hoping therefore that your Ladyshippe will read and accept the same, I take my leaue, commending you to the blessing & protection of the almightie.

Your honours to commaund,

William Perkins.

AGRAINE

OF MVSTERD SEEDE, OR, THE LEAST MEASure of grace that is, or can be effectuall to *Saluation*.

IT is a very necessarie pointe to bee known, *what is the least measure of grace that cã befal the true child of god, lesser thẽ which there is no grace effectuall to saluation.* For first of all, the right vnderstanding of this is the very foundation of true comfort vnto all troubled and touched

ched consciences. Secondly, it is a notable meanes to stirre vp thankfulnes in them that haue any grace at all; when they shall in examination of thēselues consider that they haue receiued of god the least measure of grace, or more. Thirdly it wil be an inducement, and a spurre vnto many careless and vnrepentant persons, to embrace the gospel, and to begin repentaunce for theyr sinnes; when they shall perceiue, and that by the word of God, that God accepts the very seeds and rudiments of faith and repentance at the first; though they be but in measure as a graine of musterd-seede. Now then for the opening & clearing of this point, I wil sette downe sixe seuerall conclusions, in such order as one shall confirme and explane the other, and one depend vpon the other.

I. Con-

I. Conclusion.

A man that doth but begin to be conuerted, is euen at that instant the very child of God: though inwardly he be more carnall then spirituall.

The Exposition.

IN a man there must be considered three things, the substance of the bodie and soule, whereof a man is said to consist, the faculties placed in the soule and exercised in the body, as vnderstanding, wil, affectiõs: the integritie and puritie of the faculties, whereby they are conformable to the wil of God, and beare his Image. And since the fall of *Adam*, man is not depriued of his substance, or of the powers and faculties of his soule, but onely of the third

third, which is the purity of nature. And therefore the conuerſion of a ſinner, whereof the concluſion ſpeaketh, is not ỹ change of the ſubſtance of man, or the faculties of the ſoule: but a renewing and reſtoring of that puritie and holineſſe which was loſt by mans fall, with the aboliſhment of that naturall corruption that is in all the powers of the ſoule. This is the worke of God, and of God alone, and that on this manner. Firſt of all when it pleaſeth God to worke a change in any, hee doth it not firſt in one parte, then in another, as he that repaires a decayed houſe by peece-meale: but the worke, both for the beginning, continuance, and accompliſhment, is the whole man, and euery part at once, ſpecially in the minde, conſcience, will and affection: as on the contrarie

trarie, when *Adam* loſt the Image of God, hee loſt it in euery parte. Secondly, the conuerſion of a ſinner is not wrought all at one inſtant, but in continuance of time, and that by certaine meaſures and degrees. And a man is in the firſt degree of his conuerſion, when the holy Ghoſt by the meanes of the word, inſpires him with ſome ſpirituall motions, and begins to regenerate and renew the inward powers of his ſoule. And he may in this caſe very fitly be compared to the night in ſ firſt dawning of the day in which though the darkneſſe remaine and be more in quantity then the light, yet the ſun hath alreadie caſt ſome beames of light into the aire, wherupō we tearm it the breaking of the day. Now then the very point which I touch, is that a man at this inſtant & in this very ſtate (God

as

as yet hauing but laid certaine beginnings of true conuersion in his hart) is ꝑ very child of god, & that not only in ꝑ eternal purpose of god (as all the elect are) but indeede by actual adoption: & this is plain by a manifest reasō. There be foure special works of grace in euery childe of God, his vnion with Christ, his adoption, iustification, and conuersion, and these foure are wrought all at one instant, so as for order of time neither goes before nor after other: and yet in regard of order of nature, vnion with Christ, Iustification, and adoption, go before the inwarde conuersion of a sinner, it being the fruit and effect of them all. Vpon this it followeth necessarily, that a sinner in the very first act of his conuersion, is iustified, adopted, & incorporated into the misticalbody of Christ. In the parable of the

the prodigall ſonne, the father with ioy receiues his wicked childe, but when? ſurely when hee ſawe him comming a farre off, and when as yet hee had made no confeſsion or humiliation to his father, but onely had conceiued with himſelfe a purpoſe to returne and to ſay, Father I haue ſinned againſt heauen and againſt thee, &c. And *Paul* ſaith of many of the Corinthians, that hee could not ſpeake vnto them as ſpirituall men, but as carnall, euen babes in Chriſt. 1 *Cor.* 3. 1.

II. *Con-*

II. Conclusion.

The first materiall beginnings of the conuersion of a sinner, or the smallest measure of renewing grace, haue the promises of this life, and the life to come.

The Exposition.

THE beginnings of conuersion must be distinguished. Some are beginnings of preparations, some beginnings of composition. Beginnings of preparation are such as bring vnder, tame, and subdue the stubburnenesse of mans nature, without making any chāge at al: of this sort are the accusations of the conscience by the ministrie of the Law, feares and terrors arising thence, compunctiō of hart, which is the apprehension of Gods anger against sin. Now these and the like I exclude in ỹ conclusion, for though they

they go before to prepare a ſinner to his conuerſiō folowing, yet are they no graces of God, but fruits of the law, that is the miniſtery of death, & of an accuſing conſcience. Beginnings of compoſition I tearme all thoſe inward motions and inclinations of Gods ſpirit, that follow after the worke of the law vpon the conſcience: and riſe vpon the meditation of the Goſpel, that promiſeth righteouſneſſe and life euerlaſting by Chriſt: out of which motions the conuerſion of a ſinner ariſeth, & of this it conſiſteth: what theſe are it ſhal afterward appear. Again, grace muſt be diſtinguiſhed: it is twofold, reſtraining grace, or renuing grace. Reſtraining grace I tearme certaine common gifts of God, ſeruing onely to order and frame the outward conuerſation of men to the Law of God, or ſeruing to bereaue men

men of excuſe in the day of iudge-
ment. By this kinde of grace, hea-
then men haue beene liberall, iuſt,
ſober, valiant. By it men liuing in
the church of God, haue beene in-
lightened, and hauing taſted of the
good word of God, haue reioyced
therein, and for a time outwardly
conformed themſelues therto. Re-
newing grace is not common to all
men, but proper to the elect, and it
is a gift of Gods ſpirit, wherby the
corruption of ſin is not only reſtrai-
ned, but alſo mortified, and the de-
caied Image of God reſtored. Now
then the concluſion muſt onely be
vnderſtood of the ſecond, and not
of the firſt, for though a man haue
neuer ſo much of this reſtraining
grace, yet vnleſſe he haue the ſpirit
of Chriſt to create faith in the hart,
and to ſanctifie him, hee is as farre
from ſaluation as any other. Now
then

then the sense and meaning of the conclusion is, that the very least meanes of sauing grace, and the very beginnings or seedes of regeneration do declare, & after a sort giue title to men, of all the mercifull promises of God, whether they concerne this life or the life to come: & therefore are approued of God, if they be in truth, & accepted as greater measures of grace. That which our saviour Christ saith of the work of miracles, *If ye haue faith as a graine of Musterd-seede, ye shall say vnto this mountaine remoue hence to yonder place, and it shall remoue*, must by the law of equal proportiõ be applied to faith, repentance, the feare of God, and al other graces, if they bee truely wrought in the heart, though they be but as small as one little graine of Musterd-seede, they shal be sufficiently effectuall to bring forth good

workes, for which they are ordained. The Prophet *Eſay* 42.3. ſaith, that Chriſt *ſhall not quench the ſmoking flaxe, nor breake the bruſed reede*, Let the compariſon be marked: fire in flax muſt be both little & weake, in quantitie as a ſparke or twaine, that cannot cauſe a flame but onely a ſmoke, ſpecially in a matter ſo eaſie to burne. Here then is ſignified, that that the gifts and graces of Gods ſpirit, that are both for meaſure and ſtrength as a ſpark or twaine of fire, ſhall not bee neglected, but rather accepted and cheriſhed by Chriſt. When our ſauiour Chriſt heard the young man make a confeſſion of a practiſe but of outward and ciuill righteouſneſſe, *he looked vpon him and loued him*: and when hee heard the Scribe to ſpeake diſcreetely but one good ſpeech, that to loue God with all the heart is aboue all ſacrifices,

ces, he ſaid vnto him, *That he was not farre from the kingdom of heauen.* Therfore no doubt, he will loue with a more ſpecial loue, and accept as the good ſubiects of his kingdome, thoſe that haue receiued a further mercy of God to bee borne a new of water and of the ſpirit:

III. Concluſion.

A conſtant and earneſt deſire to bee reconciled to God, to beleeue and to repent, if it bee in a touched heart, is in acceptation with God, as reconciliation, faith, repentance it ſelfe;

The Expoſition.

LVſt or deſire is twofolde, naturall and ſupernaturall. Naturall is, that whoſe beginning and obiect is in nature, that is, which ariſeth of the naturall will of man

and affecteth ſuch things as are thought to be good according to the light of nature. And this kind of deſire hath his degrees, yet ſo as they are al limited within the compas of nature. Some deſire riches, honours, pleaſures, ſome learning and knowledge: becauſe it is the light and perfection of the minde: ſome go further and ſeeke after the vertues of iuſtice, tẽperance, liberalitie, &c. & thus many heathen mẽ haue excelled. Some againe deſire true happineſſe, as *Balaam* did, who wiſhed to die the death of the righteous: becauſe it is the property of nature to ſeeke the preſeruation of it ſelfe. But here nature ſtaies it ſelf: for where the minde reueales not, the wil affects not. Supernatural deſires are ſuch as both for their beginning and obiect, are aboue nature, for their beginning is from the holy

holy ghoſt, & the obiect or matter about which they are conuerſant, are things diuine & ſpiritual, which cõcern the kingdom of heauen: and of this kind are the deſires of which I ſpeak in this place. Again, that we may not be deceiued in our deſires, but may the better diſcerne them from flittering & fleeting motions, I adde three reſtraints. Firſt of all, the deſire of reconciliation, the deſire to beleeue, or the deſire to repent, &c. muſt be conſtant and haue continuance, otherwiſe it may iuſtly be ſuſpected. Secondly it muſt bee earneſt and ſerious, though not alwaies, yet at ſometimes, that wee may be able to ſay with *Dauid*, *My* ſoule deſireth after thee O Lorde, as the thirſty land. *And*, as the hart braieth after the riuers of water, ſo panteth my ſoule after thee O God. my ſoule thirſteth for God, euen

the liuing God. Thirdly it muſt bee in a touched heart; for when a mā is touched in conſcience, the heart is caſt down, & (as much as it can) it withdrawes it ſelfe from God. For this cauſe, if then there be any ſpirituall motions whereby the heart is lift vp vnto God, they are without doubt from the ſpirit of God. Thus then I auouch, that the deſire of reconciliation with God in Chriſt, is reconciliation it ſelfe: the deſire to beleue, is faith indeed: & the deſire to repent, repentance it ſelfe. But marke how. A deſire to be reconciled is not reconciliation in nature (for the deſire is one thing & recōciliation is another) but in Gods acceptation: for if we being touched throughly for our ſins, do deſire to haue them pardoned, & to be at one with god, god accepts vs as reconciled. Again deſire to beleeue, it is not faith

faith in nature, but only in Gods acception, God accepting the wil for the deede. That this doctrine is the wil & word of God, it appeares by theſe reaſons. Firſt of all, God hath annexed a promiſe of bleſſednes, & of life euerlaſting, to the deſire of grace. *Mat.5. Bleſſed are they which hũger and thirſt after righteouſneſſe, for they ſhalbe ſatisfied. Ioh.7.38. If any man thirſt let him come to me and drinke. Reue.21. I wil giue vnto him which is a-thirſt of the well of the water of life freely.*

Nowe what is this, to thirſt? properly it is, when wee are in a drought or drieneſſe, and wante drinke to refreſh vs, to deſire it. And therefore by a reſemblance, they are ſaide to thirſt after righteouſneſſe, that wante it and wold faine haue it. And they thirſt after Chriſt, that feele themſelues

out of Christ, and desire, yea long after the bloud of Christ, that they might bee refreshed with it in their consciences. Here then we see that the desire of mercy in the want of mercy, is the obtaining of mercy, & the desire to beleeue, in the want of faith, is faith: Though as yet thou want firme and liuely grace, yet art thou not altogether voyd of grace, if thou canst desire it, thy desire is the seede, conception, or budde of that which thou wāteſt: now is the spring time of the ingrafted word or the immortal seede cast into the furrowes of thy heart: waite but a while, vsing good meanes, & thou shalt see y leaues, blossoms, & fruits wil shortly folow after: Secōdly the desire of any good thing is accepted of God as the liuely inuocation of his holy name, *Psa:* 10. *God heareth the desires of the poore. Psal.* 145. *He will fulfill*

fulfil the desire of them that feare him. When *Moses* said nothing, but only desired in heart the helpe and protection of God at the redde sea, the Lord said vnto him: why crieſt thou vnto me. *Exod.* 14. And when wee knowe not to praye as wee ought, *Paule* saith, that the spirit maketh requeſt by the inward groanes of the hart. *Rom.* 8.26. Hence I gather, that when a man in his weakneſſe praies with sighes and groanes, for the gift of liuely faith, the want whereof he findes in himselfe; his very prayer on this manner made, is as truly in acceptation with God, as the praier made in liuely faith. Thirdly to the 3
teſtimonie of Scripture, I adde the teſtimonies of Godlye and learned men, not to proue the doctrine in hand; but to shew a consent, and to proue thus much, that the thing which I auouch is no priuate phantasie of

any

anie man. [a] Augustine saith, *Let thy desire be before him, & thy father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly: for thy desire is thy praier, and if thy desire be continuall thy prayer is continual.* He addes further, in the same place, that, *the desire is a continuall voice, and the crie of the heart, and the inward innocatiõ of God, which may be made without intermission.* Againe, [b] *The whole life of a good Christiã, is an holy will and desire. And that which thou desirest thou seest not: but by desiring art, as it were, inlarged and made capable, that when it shal come which thou shalt see, thou maist be filled.* [c] Bernard saith, *What, is not desire a voice? Yea a very strong voice. God heareth the desire of the poore, and a cõtinual desire, though we speak nothing is a voice continued.* [d] Luther saith, *Christ is then truly omnipotent, and then truly raignes in vs, when we are so weake that we can scarce giue any grone.* For Paul

a Psal. 36.

b Exposit. Epist. Iohn. tract. 4. de. Cap. 4.

c Super. cant Serm 84.

d Tom. 4 pag. 124

Paul ſaith that one ſuch grone is a ſtrõg
cry in the eares of God, filling both heauen
and earth. e Againe, very fewe knowe
how weake and ſmal faith, & hope is vn- e Ib fol. 156.
der the croſſe and in temptatiõ. For it ap-
peares thẽ to be as ſmoking flaxe, which
a good blaſt of winde would preſently put
out: but ſuch as beleeue in theſe combats,
and terrours againſt hope, vnder hope,
that is, oppoſing themſelues by faith in
the promiſe of Chriſt againſt the feeling
of ſinne, and the wrath of God, doo finde
afterward that this little ſparke of faith
(as it appeares to reaſon, which hardly
perceiueth it) is peraduenture as ỹ whole
element of fire which filleth al heauen &
ſwalloweth vp al terrors & ſins. f Again, f
the more wee finde our vnworthineſſe Ib. fol. 300.
and the leſſe wee finde the promiſes to
belong vnto vs, the more muſt we deſire
them, beeing aſſured that this deſire doth
greatly pleaſe God, who deſireth and wil-
leth that his grace ſhould be earneſtly de-
ſired.

sured. This doth faith, which indoweth it a pretious thing and therefore greatlye hungereth and thirsteth after it, and so obtaines it. For God is delighted to fill the hungry with good things, and to send the rich emptie away. [h] Theodore Beza saith, If thou find not thine hart inwardly touched, pray that it may be touched: for then must thou knowe that this desire is a pledge of the fathers good wil to thee: [i] Kemnitius saith, When I haue a good desire, though it do scarcely shew it self in some litle and slender sigh, I must be assured that the spirite of God, is present and worketh his good worke. [k] Vrsinus saith, Faith in the most holy men in this life is vnperfect and weake. Yet neuertheless, whosoeuer feeles in his heart an earnest desire to beleeue, and a striuing against his naturall doubtings, both can and must assure himselfe that he is indued with true faith. Again, Wicked men do not desire the grace of the holy spirit, whereby

h Resp. ad Acta Colloq. Monpel.

i Locor com. par. 1.

k Catechis.

whereby they may resist sinne. And therfore they are iustly deprived of it: for hee that earnestly desireth the holy Ghost, hath it already: because this desire of the spirite cannot be but from the spirite: as it is said, *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousnesse, for they shall be satisfied.* l Bradford saith, *Thy sinnes are vndoubtedly pardoned &c. for God hath giuen thee a penitent and beleeuing heart: that is an heart which desireth to repent, and beleeue: for such an one is taken of him (he accepting the will for the deede) for a penitent and beleeuing heart indeed.* m Taffine saith, *Our faith may bee so small and weake, as it doth not yet bring forth fruites that may be liuely felt of vs, but if they which feele themselues in such estate, desire to haue these feelings [namely of gods fauour and loue] if they aske them at Gods hands by prayer; this desire and prayer are testimonies that the spirit of God is in them, and that they*

l Epistle to Careless.

m Booke of the markes of Gods children.

they haue faith alreadie: for is such a desire, a fruit of the flesh, or of the spirite? it is of the holy spirite, who bringeth it forth onely in such as hee dwelles in &c. Then these holy desires and praiers beeing the motions of the holy Ghost in vs, are testimonies of our faith, although they seeme to vs small and weake. As the woman that feeleth the mouing of a child, in her body, though very weake, assureth her self that she hath conceiued, and that shee goeth with a liue child: so if we haue these motions, these holy affections, and desires before mentioned, lette vs not doubt but that wee haue the holy Ghost (who is the author of them) dwelling in vs, and consequently that we haue also faith. Againe he saith, If thou hast begun to hate and flee sinne, if thou feelest that thou art displeased at thine infirmities, and corruptions: if hauing offended God thou feelest a griefe & sorrow for it: if thou desire to abstaine: if thou

Simile

thou auoidest the occasions: if thou trauailest to do thy endeuor: if thou praiest to God to giue thee grace: al these holy affections proceeding from none other then from the spirit of God, ought to be so many pledges, and testimonies that he is in thee. [n] Maister knokes saith. *Albeit your paines sometimes be so horrible that you find no release nor comfort neither in spirit nor body, yet if thy heart can onely sob vnto god, despaire not, you shal obtain your hearts desire. And destitute you are not of faith: for at such time as the flesh, natural reason, the law of God, the preset torment, the diuel at one do crie, God is angry, & therefore there is neither help nor remedy to be hoped for at his handes: at such time, I say, to sob vnto God is the demonstration of the secret seede of God, which is hid in Gods elect children: and that onely sob is vnto God a more acceptable sacrifice, then without this crosse, to giue our bodies to bee burnt, euen for the truthes sake.* More testimonies might bee alleaged, but these shall suffice.

[n] Psa. 6.

suffice.

Against this point of doctrine it maye be alleaged: that, if desire to beleeue in our weakenesse be faith indeede; then some are iustified and may be saued wanting a liuely apprehension and full perswasion of Gods mercie in Christ. *Answere.* Iustifying faith in regard of his nature is alwaies one and the same, and the essentiall propertie thereof is to apprehend Christ with his benefites, and to assure the verye conscience thereof. And therefore without some apprehension and assuraunce there can be no iustification or Saluation in them that for age are able to beleeue. Yet there bee certaine degrees, and measures of true faith. There is a strong faith, which causeth a ful apprehension and perswasion of Gods mercie in Christ. This measure of faith the Lord vouchsafed

fed *Abraham, Dauid, Paule*, the prophets, and Apostles and Martyrs of God. It were a blessed thing, if all beleeuers might attaine to this height of liuely faith, to saye with *Paul*, I am perswaded, that neither life, nor death, nor any thing elſe, ſhall be able to ſeperate vs from the loue of God in Chriſt: but all cannot; therefore there is another degree of faith lower thē the former, and yet true faith, called a little or weak faith, and it alſo hath a power to apprehend & apply the promiſe of ſaluation, but as yet by reaſon of weakneſſe, it is infolded (as it were) and wrapt vp in the hart, as the leafe and bloſſome in the bud. For ſuch perſons as haue this weake faith, can ſay indeede, that they beleeue their ſinnes to be pardonable, and that they deſire to haue thē pardoned: but as yet they cannot ſay, that

they are without al doubt pardoned. And yet ꝑ mercie of god is not wanting vnto them. For in that they do, and can desire, and indeuour to apprehend, they do indeed apprehēd; god accepting the desire to do the thing, for ꝑ thing done. This which I say, will the better appeare if the grounds therof be considered: Faith doth not iustifie in respect of it selfe, because it is an action, or vertue: or because it is strong, liuely, and perfect: but in respecte of the obiect thereof, namelie Christ crucified, whome faith apprehendeth as he is set foorth vnto vs in the word & sacraments. It is Christ that is the aucthor, & matter of our iustice, & it is he that applieth the same vnto vs: as for faith in vs, it is but an instrument to apprehend & receiue that which Christ for his parte offereth and giueth. Therefore, if faith erre not in his

his proper obiect, but follow the promise of god, though it do weaklie apprehend, or at the least cause a man only to endeuour and desire to apprehend, it is true faith, and iustifieth. Though our apprehension be necessarie, yet our saluation stands rather in this that God apprehends vs for his own, then that we apprehend him. Phil. 3. ver. 12.

Out of this conclusion springs an other not to be omitted, that God accepts the endeuour of the whole man to obey, for perfect obedience it selfe.

THat is, if mē indeuour to please God in all things, God wil not iudge their doings by the rigour of his lawe: but wil accept their litle & weak endeuor, to do that which they can doo by his grace, as if they had perfectly fulfilled the lawe. But heere remember I put this caueat, that this indeuour must bee

in and by the whole man; the verye mind, conſcience, wil, and affectiõs, doing that which they can in their kinds: & thus this indeuour, which is a fruit of the ſpirit, ſhalbe diſtinguiſhed from ciuill righteouſneſſe, which may be in heathen mẽ. The truth of this concluſiõ appeares by that which the Prophet *Malachi* ſaith, that God will ſpare them, that fear him, as a father ſpares his child: who accepts the thing done, as wel doone, if the child ſhewe his good will, to pleaſe his father, and to doo what he can.

IIII, Con-

IIII. Conclusion.

To see and feele in our selues the want of any grace, and to be greeued therefore, is the grace it selfe.

The Exposition.

Vnderstand this conclusiō as the former, namely that greefe of heart for the want of any grace necessary to saluation, is as much with God as the grace it selfe. When being in distresse, wee cannot pray as wee ought; God accepts the very groanes, sobbes, and sighes of the perplexed heart, as the prayer it self. Rom. 8. 26. When we are greeued, because we cannot be greeued for our sins, it is a degree & measure of godly sorrow before God. Augustine saith well: *Sometimes our prayer* com. 4. lib. 1 ad Simplic. in fine.

is lukewarme, or rather cold and almoſt no prayer: nay ſometime it is altogither no prayer at all, and yet we *cannot with griefe perceiue this in our ſelues: for if we can but greeue, becauſe we cannot pray, we now pray indeed.* Hierom ſaith, *The* we *are iuſt when we do acknowledge our ſelues to be ſinners:* Againe, *this is the true* wiſdome *of man, to know himſelf to be imperfect: And (that I may ſo ſpeake) the perfection of all iuſt men in the fleſh is imperfect:* Auguſtin again ſaith, *That the vertue which is now in a iuſt man is thus far forth perfect, that vnto the perfection thereof there belongs a true acknowledgement and an humble confeſſion of the imperfection thereof.* A broken and contrite heart after an offence, is as much with God, as if there had bin no offence at all. And therefore ſo ſoone as *Dauid* after his grieuous fall in heauineſſe of heart confeſſed his ſinne, ſaying in effect but thus much:

Lib. 1. contract. Pelagim.

much: *I haue ſinned*, the prophet in the name of the Lord, pronounceth the pardon of his ſinne in heauen, and that preſently.

V. Concluſion.

He that hath begun to ſubiect himſelfe to Chriſt and his word, though as yet he be ignorant in moſt points of religion: yet if hee haue a care to increaſe in knowledge and to practiſe that which he knoweth, he is accepted of God as a true beleeuer.

The Expoſition.

SVndry perſons by the Euāgeliſts are ſaid to beleue, which had only ſeen ꝧ miracles of Chriſt, & as yet had made no further proceedings but to acknowledge chriſt to be the

Meſsias, and to ſubmit themſelues, to him and his doctrine, which afterward ſhould be taught. On this maner the woman of Samaria beliued, & many of the Samaritans vpon her report: & a certain ruler, by reaſon of a miracle wrought vpon his ſonne, is ſaid to beleeue, and all his houſhold *Ioh.* 4. 42. 52. When our Sauiour Chriſt cõmendeth the faith of the Apoſtles, terming it a rocke againſt which the gates of hel ſhuld not preuail, it was not for the plentifull knowledge of the doctrine of ſaluation: for they were ignorant of many articles of faith, as namely of the death, reſurrection, aſcenſion and Kingdome of Chriſt: but becauſe they beleeued him to be the ſon of God, and the ſauior of mankinde, and they had withal reſolued thẽſelues to cleaue vnto him, & the bleſſed doctrine of ſaluation which

he

he taught, though as yet they were ignorant in many points. The holy Ghoſt commendeth the faith of *Rahab* when ſhee receiued the ſpies. Now this hir faith was indeed but a ſeede and beginning of liuely faith: forthen ſhe had onely heard of the miracles done in *Egypt*, and of the deliuerance of the Iſraelites, and was therupon ſmitten with a feare, and hadde conceiued a reſolution with her ſelfe, to ioyne her ſelfe to the Iſraelites, and to worſhip the true God. Nowe theſe and the like are tearmed beleeuers, vpon iuſt cauſe: for though they be ignorant as yet, yet their ignorance ſhall be no continuing or laſting ignorance: and they haue excellent ſeedes of grace, namely a purpoſe of heart to cleaue to Chriſt, and a care to profit in the doctrine of ſaluation.

VI. Con-

VI. Conclusion.

The foresaide beginnings of grace are counterfeit, vnlesse they encrease.

The Exposition.

THe wickednes of mans nature & the depth of hipocrisie is such, that a man may and can easily transforme himselfe into the counterfeict & resemblance of any grace of God. Therefore I put down here a certaine note whereby the gifts of God may be discerned, namely, that they grow vp & encrease as ỹ graine of Musterd-seed to a great tree, and beare fruit answerably. The grace in the heart is like the graine of musterd-seede in two things. First it is smal to see to at ỹ beginning: secondly, after it is cast into the grounde of the

the heart, it encreaseth speedily, and spreads it selfe. Therfore, if a man at the first haue but some little feeling of his wants, some weake and faint desire, some small obedience, he must not let this sparke of grace go out: but these motions of the spirit must bee encreased by the vse of the word, sacraments, and prayer; and they must daily bee stirred vp by meditating, indeuoring, striuing, asking, seeking, knocking. The master deliuering his talents to his seruants, saith vnto them, Occupie till I come: & not, hide thē in the earth, *Mat.* 25.26: *Paul* vseth an excellent speech to *Timothie*: I exhort thee to stirre vp the gift of God which is in thee, namely as fire is stirred vp by often blowing, and by putting to of wood 2. *Tim.* 1.6. As for such motions of the hart that last for a weeke, or a month, and after vanish away, they

they are not to be regarded: and the Lord by the Prophet *Oſea* complaineth of them ſaying, O *Ephraim*, thy righteouſneſſe is like the morning dew.

Therfore conſidering, grace vnleſſe it be confirmed and exerciſed, is indeed no grace; I wil here adde certaine rules of direction that we may the more eaſily put in practiſe ſpirituall exerciſes of inuocation, faith, and repentance: and thereby alſo quicken and reuiue the ſeedes and beginnings of grace.

1. In what place ſoeuer thou art, whether alone or abroad, by day or by night, and whatſoeuer thou art doing, ſet thy ſelfe in the preſence of God, let this perſwaſion alwaies take place in thy heart, that thou art before the liuing God: and do thy indeuour that this perſwaſion may ſmite thy hart with awe and reuerence,

rence, and make thee afraide to sin. This counsell the Lord gaue *Abraham.Gen.17,1. Walke before me and be vpright.* This thing also was practised by *Enoch*, who for this cause is saide *to walke before God.*

2. Esteeme of euery present day as of the day of thy death: and therfore liue as though thou were dying; and do those good duties euery day, that thou wouldst do if thou wert dying. This is christian watchfulnesse, and remember it.

3. Make catalogues and billes of thine owne sinnes, specially of those sinnes that haue most dishonoured god, and wounded thine own conscience: set them before thee often, specially then when thou hast any particular occasion of renewing thy repentance, that thy heart by this dolefull sight may bee further humbled. This was *Dauids* practise when

when he considered his wayes and turned his feete to Gods commandements. *Psal.* 119,57: And when he confessed the sinnes of his youth. *Psal:* 25. This was *Iobs* practise, when he said he was not able to answere one of a thousand of his sins vnto God. *Iob.* 9,1.

When thou first openest thyne eies in a morning, pray to God, and giue him thanks heartily: God then shall haue his honor, and thy heart shall bee the better for it the whole day following. For we see in experience, that vessels keepe long the taste of that liquour wherwith they are first seasoned. And when thou liest downe let that bee the last also: for thou knowest not, whether fallen asleepe, thou shall euer rise againe aliue. Good therefore it is that thou shouldest giue vppe thy selfe into the hands of God, whilst

thou

thou art waking:

5 Labour to ſee and feele thy ſpiritual pouertie, that is, to ſee the want of graee in thy ſelfe, ſpecially thoſe inward corruptions, of vnbeleefe, pride, ſelfeloue, &c. Labour to bee diſpleaſed with thy ſelfe: and labour to feele that by reaſon of them thou ſtandeſt in neede of euery drop of the bloud of Chriſt, to heal & cleanſe thee frō theſe wants: & let this practiſe take ſuch place with thee, that if thou be demanded, what in thine eſtimatiō is the vileſt of the creatures vpon earth? thine heart and conſcience may anſwere with a loude voice, I, euen I, by reaſon of mine owne ſinnes: and again, if thou be demanded what is the beſt thing in the worlde for thee? thy heart and conſcience may aunſwere againe with a ſtrong and loude cryæ, one droppe of the bloud of Chriſt to

waſh

wash away my sinnes.

6. Shew thy selfe to be a member of Christ, and a seruant of God, not onely in the generall calling of a christian, but also in the particular calling in which thou art placed. It is not inough for a magistrate to be a christian man, but he must also be a christiā magistrate: it is not inough for a master of a family to be a christian man, or a christian in the church, but he must also be a christian in his familie, and in the trade which hee followeth daily. Not euery one ẏ is a commō hearer of the word, & a frequenter of the lords table, is therfore a good Christian, vnlesse his conuersation in his priuate house, and in his priuate affaires and dealings be sutable. There is a man to be seene, what he is.

7. Search the scriptures, to see what is sinne, and what is not sinne in euery

uery action: this done, carrie in thy heart a constant and resolute purpose, not to sinne in any thing: for faith and the purpose of sinning can neuer stand together.

8, Let thine endeuour bee sutable to thy purpose: and therefore exercise thy self to eschew euery sin, and to obey God in euery one of his commandements, that pertaine either to the general calling of a christian, or to thy particular calling. Thus did good *Iosias*, who turned vnto God with all his heart, according *to all* the law of *Moses* 1. *Kin.* 25, 25. & thus did *Zacharie* & *Elizabeth* that walked *in all* the commandements of God without reproofe. *Luc* 1,6.

9. If at any time, against thy purpose and resolution, thou be ouertaken with any sinne little or great, lie not in it, but speedely recouer thy

ſelf by repentance: humble thy ſelf, confeſſing thine offence, & by praier intreating the Lord to pardon the ſame, and that earneſtly, till ſuch time as thou findeſt thy conſcience truely pacified, and thy care to eſchew the ſame ſin encreaſed.

10 Conſider often of the right and proper ende of thy life in this world, which is not to ſeeke profit, honor, pleaſure, but that in ſeruing of men, we might ſerue God in our callings. God could, if it ſo pleaſed him, preſerue man without the miniſterie of man, but his pleaſure is to fulfill his worke and will in the preſeruation of our bodies, and ſaluation of our ſoules, by the imploiment of men in his ſeruice, euery one according to his vocation. Neither is there ſo much as a bondſlaue, but hee muſt in and by his faithfull ſeruice to his maſter, ſerue the Lord.

Men

Men therefore do commonly profane their labours and liues, by aiming at a wrong ende, when all their care consisteth onely in getting sufficient maintenance for thē and theirs, for the obtaining of credit, riches, and carnall commodities. For thus men serue themselues, and not God, or men: much lesse do they serue God in seruing of men.

11 Giue al diligence to make thy election sure, and to gather manifold tokens thereof. For this cause obserue the works of Gods prouidence, loue, and mercie, both in thee and vppon thee; from time to time: for the serious consideration of them, and the laying of them together when they are many and seuerall, minister much direction, assurance of Gods fauor and comfort. This was the practise of *Dauid*, 1. *Sam.* 17, 33. *Psal.* 23. all.

12. Thinke euermore thy preſent eſtate whatſoeuer it bee, to be the beſt eſtate for thee: becauſe whatſoeuer befalles thee, though it be ſickneſſe or any other affliction, or death, befals thee of the good prouidence of God. That this may the better be done, labour to ſee and acknowledge a prouidence of god, aſwel in pouerty, as in aboundance, as well in diſgrace as good report, as well in ſickneſſe as in health, as wel in life as in death.

13. Pray continually, I meane not by ſolemne and ſet prayer, but by ſecret and inwarde eiaculations of the heart, that is, by a continuall eleuation of minde vnto Chriſt, ſitting at the right hand of God the father, and that either by praier or giuing of thanks ſo often as any occaſion ſhall be offered.

14. Think often of the worſt and

moſt

moſt greeuous things that may befal thee either in life or death for the name of Chriſt: make a reckoning of them, and prepare thy ſelfe to beare them: that when they come, they may not ſeeme ſtrange, and be born more eaſily.

15. Make conſcience of idle, vain, vnhoneſt, & vngodly thoughts, for theſe are the ſeeds & beginnings of actuall ſin in word and deede. This want of care in ordering and compoſing of our thoughts, is oftē puniſhed with a fearefull temptation in the very thought, called of Diuines, *Tentatio blaſphemiarum*, a tentation of blaſphemies.

16. When any good motion or affection riſeth in the heart, ſuffer it not to paſſe away, but feede it by reading, meditating, praying.

17. What ſoeuer good thing thou goſt about, whither it be in word or deed

deed, do it not in a conceipt of thy ſelf, or in the pride of thy heart, but in humilitie, aſcribing the power whereby thou doſt thy worke, and the praiſe therof to God, otherwiſe thou ſhalt find by experience, God will curſe thy beſt doings.

18. Deſpiſe not ciuill honeſtie: good conſcience and good maners muſt go together: therefore remember to make cõſcience of lying, and of cuſtomable ſwearing in commõ talke: contend not eyther in deede or word with any man: be curteous and gentle to all good and badde: beare with mens wants & frailties, as haſtines, frowardnes, ſelf-liking, curiouſnes &c. paſsing by them as being not perceiued: returne not euill for euill, but rather good for euill: vſe meate, drinke, and apparel in that maner and meaſure, that they may further godlineſſe, and may be

as

as it were ſignes in which thou maieſt expreſſe the hidden grace of thy heart: Striue not to go beyond any, vnleſſe it be in good things: go before thine equals, in giuing of honour, rather then in taking of it: make conſcience of thy word, and let it be as a band: profeſſe not more outwardly then thou haſt inwardly in heart: oppreſſe or defraud no man in bargaining: in all companies eyther do good, or take good.

FINIS.